

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00605 301321Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 ARA-10 IO-13 OMB-01 MCT-01

TRSE-00 AID-05 /128 W

-----120807 301326Z /45

P R 301215Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0892

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHATRTUOM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

RUQMTGGXAMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0070

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCPAC

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0605

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MILI, DJ, ET, RU

SUBJECT: SOVIET INTENTIONS DJIBOUTI; EGYPTIAN VIEW

REF: CARIO 11484 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY - EGYPTIAN CONCERNS ABOUT ERITREA AND INCURSIONS
BY SOVIET/CUBAN-SUPPORTED TROOPS INTO SUDAN (NOTED REFTEL)
ARE ALSO REFLECTED IN DEEP WORRY ABOUT POSSIBLE DIVERSIONARY
ACTION DIRECTED AGAINST DJIBOUTI. COMMENTS BY INFLUENTIAL
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EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN DJIBOUTI INDICATE BELIEF THAT IF
ETHIOPIAN FORCES ENCOUNTER STIFF RESISTENCE IN ERITREA PRE-
VENTING RAPID VICTORY IT SEEMS LIKELY EPMG WILL SET UP
INTERNAL SUBVERSION IN DJIBOUTI IN ORDER OVERTHROW COMPLACENT
HASSAN GOULED GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR MOHAMED FAMI HEBA, A RESPECTED

AMBASSADOR WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN ARAB LEAGUE AND AFRICAN AFFAIRS, RECENTLY STATED TO CHARGE THAT DJIBOUTI MAY BE ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES OF AN ENLARGED MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN ERITREA. HIS SCENARIO IS FAIRLY UNCOMPLICATED. HE BELIEVES THAT PROTRACTED EFFORTS BY SOVIETS TO OBTAIN POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF ERITREAN PROBLEM ARE SO MUCH STAGE PLAY AS THEY ESTABLISH BATTLE ORDER FOR EVENTUAL WIDESPREAD COMBAT IN ERITREA. HEBA DOES NOT THINK THAT ETHIOPIANS, EVEN WITH SOVIET/CUBAN HELP, WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN ERITREA OTHER THAN RECONQUEST OF CERTAIN TOWNS. BECAUSE OF NEED PROVIDE ETHIOPIANS WITH CONTINUING LIST OF VICTORIES, SOVIETS WILL THEN UNLEASH MPL AND OTHER ASSOCIATED TERRORIST ELEMENTS IN CAMPAIGN WHICH WOULD EASILY UPSET THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

2. THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR DESPAIRS OF COMPLACENCY NOW BEING EXHIBITED BY PRESIDENT GOULED AND CERTAIN OF HIS MINISTERS. HE NOTES THAT HE HAS NOT SEEN THE PRESIDENT IN RECENT WEEKS, BUT THAT HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM GOULED IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT INDICATED HOW PLEASED HE WAS AT THE WAY MATTERS ARE GOING IN THE REPUBLIC.

3. HEBA ADDED A NOTE ABOUT THE WHEREABOUTS AND ACTIVITIES OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER AHMED DINI. HE SAYS THAT HIS SOURCES IN ADDIS ABABA NOTE THAT AHMED DINI HAS MET ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION WITH EPMG LEADER MENGISTU AND WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL AFAR DISSIDENT LEADERS RESIDENT IN ADDIS ABABA, ESPECIALLY CHEHEM DAOUD, FORMER DJIBOUTI MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND NOMINAL MPL GUERRILLA LEADER. HEBA DOES NOT FEEL THAT AHMED DINI HAS BEEN ABLE GAIN LEADERSHIP ROLE HE WANTED WITH THESE EXTERNAL AFAR ELEMENTS AND NOW IS SIMPLY WAITING FOR A SITUATION PROPITIOUS TO HIS GAINING POWER IN DJIBOUTI. AHMED DINI PICTURES HIMSELF AS IDEAL AFAR LEADER TO EMERGE FOLLOWING ARMED COUP ATTEMPT BY YOUNGER AFAR IDEOLOGISTS. AS MODERATE WITH POPULIST BACKGROUND, HE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO LARGER DOMESTIC GROUP AND TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. HEBA DOES NOT THINK THAT DINI'S JUDGEMENT IS NECESSARILY VALID IN THIS EVENTUALITY, AND THAT HE IS LIKELY TO BE ONE OF THE FIRST TRADITIONAL LEADERS LIQUIDATED IN A RADICAL COUP.

4. COMMENT - IN THE TWO OR THREE INTERRUPTED DISCUSSIONS HELD ON THE SUBJECT WITH HEBA, CHARGE ARGUED THAT SOMALIS PROBABLY REPRESENTS AS MUCH OF A THREAT TO DJIBOUTI AS ETHIOPIA, PERHAPS MORE SO BECAUSE ETHIOPIA'S SHORT-TERM INTERESTS ARE AS WELL SERVED BY A NEUTRAL DJIBOUTI. HEBA'S JUDGEMENT OBVIOUSLY REFLECTS STRONG ANTI-SOVIET AND MODERATELY PRO-SOMALI STANDS. NEVERTHELESS, HIS OPINIONS ARE DOUBTLESS

RECEIVED WITH RESPECT IN CAIRO AND IN TURN INFLUENCE OFFICIAL
EGYPTIAN ATTITUDES ABOUT THE HORN.
CLARKE

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